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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI IMMEDIATE 6970

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AMGT](#) [AMED](#) [CASC](#) [TBIO](#) [ASEC](#) [KFLU](#) [KSAF](#) [KSEO](#) [KPAO](#)

SUBJECT: SWINE FLU INFLUENZA UPDATE

Reftel: (A)State 6306, (B)08 State 67922, (C)08 State  
67936

¶1. Summary: This telegram provides information for employees at diplomatic and consular posts on health issues related to the recent cluster of cases of influenza-like respiratory illness that are occurring in the United State and Mexico due to a swine flu virus. This virus contains a unique genetic makeup that has not been reported previously. This cable provides information about isolated cases of non-lethal swine flu which have been reported in Southern California, Kansas and near San Antonio, Texas, as well as details of reports of a possibly similar but more lethal strain which has been reported in central Mexico. Additional sources of information are cited at the bottom. The Department will provide additional guidance as more information becomes available. Post Management and EACs are strongly encouraged to ensure that this telegram is brought to the attention of all employees and that they integrate this information into their security procedures and emergency planning. This telegram is being sent for informational and planning purposes. The World Health Organization phase of pandemic alert remains unchanged at 3 and the U.S. Federal Government remains at a Response Stage of 0.

¶2. Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza that regularly causes outbreaks of influenza among pigs. Swine flu viruses do not normally infect humans; however, human infections with swine flu do occur, and cases of human-to-human spread of swine flu viruses have been documented.

¶3. Earlier this month, a cluster of influenza-like respiratory illness in Southern California and near San Antonio, Texas, was identified by the CDC to have been caused by a type A, H1N1 swine flu virus which contains a unique genetic makeup that has not been reported previously among swine or human influenza viruses in the U.S. or elsewhere. Additional cases have just been confirmed in Kansas, and there is an ongoing investigation of a cluster in New York City. So far there have been a total of 10 confirmed cases in the U.S. Since none of the cases had exposure to pigs, there is concern that transmission is from human-to-human. The CDC and state health organizations are presently evaluating the cluster of influenza-like respiratory illness in New York City to determine if these too are caused by the same virus. So far, the cases in the U.S. have been relatively mild and there have been no deaths.

¶4. Over the past few weeks, there has also been an increase in influenza-like illnesses in Mexico and in the past several days there have been press reports of severe

influenza illnesses and a number of deaths. Some of the samples sent to the CDC for analysis have similar genetic characteristics to the viruses collected from California and Texas, but final analysis and comparison is pending. The CDC is presently assisting the WHO and Mexican Ministry of Health in responding to this public health concern. Additional information concerning swine flu and the epidemiological investigation underway in Mexico can be found at [www.cdc.gov/swineflu](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu).

¶5. The Operations Center, American Embassy Mexico City, OEM, OES/IHB, CA, MED and others are monitoring this situation very closely and are working in coordination with other government and international public health agencies to gather information and to provide support to investigational and response teams. Public health officials have increased monitoring and surveillance efforts both in the U.S. and in Mexico.

¶6. Posts are requested to review their pandemic influenza plans and tripwires. (Reftel A provided posts with new general tripwires to be part of current planning as a basic minimum and posts were encouraged to incorporate additional, country-specific information in their final version of their pandemic influenza tripwires.) Posts are also encouraged to review reftels B and C for additional information and guidance. Post should also ensure that supplies of masks, gloves, gowns, antiviral medication and other supplies are adequate. Health units should increase their surveillance of influenza-like illness and report any increase in activity to MED/DASHO.

¶7. The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough,

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sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with swine flu infection in humans. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions. Those experiencing any of these influenza-like symptoms mentioned above and who have recently traveled to Mexico or to areas in the U.S. experiencing swine influenza cases should contact their health unit and/or Regional Medical Officer to see if additional testing or treatment is recommended.

¶8. All personnel are encouraged to follow the everyday actions listed below that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like the influenza illness.

--Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

--If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

--Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.

--Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

¶9. Additional information on swine flu and pandemic influenza can also be accessed through [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov). Further information on State

Department's actions can be found at  
[https://www.intelink.gov/wiki/Portal:Crisis\\_Pandemic\\_Influenza](https://www.intelink.gov/wiki/Portal:Crisis_Pandemic_Influenza).

¶10. Minimize considered.  
CLINTON